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Vancouver metro

Your essential daily news | WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2016

High 21°C/Low 14°C Partly cloudy

The rise of the *occasional* vegan

metroLIFE

Inspections down in red-hot market

HOUSING CRISIS

As few as 10% of homes are inspected before they're sold

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Buyers beware. The majority of homes sold in Vancouver's red-hot real estate market are now being bought virtually sight unseen.

According to the Home Inspectors Association of British Columbia, as few as 10 per cent of the homes sold in the region so far this year have been inspected prior to sale, compared to 75 per cent just 12 months ago.

It says rampant bidding wars pressure house hunters into putting in subject-free offers in order to seal the deal, leaving new owners with no chance to professionally evaluate the condition of a property.

"Things have changed, definitely," agreed Kevin Girard, who recently won a bidding war against four competing offers on a 90-year-old East Vancouver home by putting in a bid void of subjects. "Going subject-free is the next evolution of this market that I can see."

Like many buyers, Girard understood the risks involved with forgoing an inspection but those concerns were outweighed by the fear of missing out on one of the few properties on the market that fit both his family's needs and budget.

The home ended up selling for just under a million dollars but he's since racked up more than $25,000 in repair costs (and counting) after a post-sale inspection identified rodents, holes in the wall, water leaks and even asbestos tiles buried in the backyard.

While angry the seller didn't disclose the deficiencies, Girard says he'd do it again to secure a home if he had to.

"I think it's bit like the Wild West," he said. "Looking at the prices over the last year, if we were going to own a house in Vancouver it would have had to be now."

On Tuesday, the HIABC called on the provincial government to implement a mandatory seven-day "cooling off" period on accepted real estate offers.

This is already done in development pre-sales and allows buyers to do their due diligence of a property before closing.

"It's the biggest investment of their lives and they're not able to find out what's wrong with their home," said Darryl Bailey of AusCan Building Inspections.

KAYAKS KIBOSHED

Boaters challenge paddling ban in Burrard Inlet

metroNEWS

metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Student's family fights for his release as Bangladeshi police keeping him detained. **World**

Distraught mom pleads for help in abduction case

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Vancouver woman says her kids were taken to Iran

Vancouver Island woman tearfully pleaded with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Tuesday to call the president of Iran to secure the return of her four children to Canada, saying Iranian officials are ready to co-operate with Canadian authorities in the abduction case.

"Now is the time, I need leadership now," Alison Azer told a news conference in Ottawa.

"My children can't rescue themselves."

Azer said her ex-husband, Saren Mahmudi-Azer, accused of abducting his children and shuttling them to the Middle East last August, was detained by authorities in Iran last month, but then released on bail.

The children, ranging in age from four to 11, were taken to Iran through war-torn Iraq following a lengthy and unsuccessful court battle to prevent her ex from travelling with them, she said.

When he failed to bring them back, a Canada-wide warrant was issued and a "red notice" posted by Interpol for the father's arrest.

Before he allegedly abducted his children, Saren Azer was a well-known doctor on Vancouver Island.

He was once lauded by former Conservative cabinet minister Jason Kenney as a man "doing tremendous work" with Canada's Kurdish community by helping Iraqi refugees. He was also featured in one of Stephen Harper's 2015 promotional videos, where he thanked the former prime minister for extending Canada's mission to battle Islamic extremists in Iraq.

The children's mother met personally with Trudeau in May to ask for help, and she said the prime minister made clear the case was being taken seriously. Since then, however, the file has been "collecting dust" on the PM's desk while authorities in Iran wait for Canada to act, she said.

"The Iranians have shown a willingness, and actions, as a result of Canada's Interpol notice," said Azer. "They are motivated to resolve this."

In Montreal Tuesday, Trudeau said the Azer children were "a real preoccupation," calling it a troubling consular case.

"We continue to be very closely involved, the RCMP, consular services and the government of Canada, to try and bring those kids home to safety," he said.

But a request from the RCMP to communicate with Interpol Iran was blocked by senior Canadian government officials, Azer alleged.

If that's true, Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Dion has some explaining to do, said New Democrat foreign affairs critic Helene Laverdiere.

"The minister must immediately explain why officials from his department prevented the RCMP from working to secure the return of these four Canadian children," she said in a statement.

Dion's department did not directly respond to the allegation Tuesday. A spokesperson said Canadian consular officials were "working closely" with authorities both at home and abroad, including law enforcement.

Early last month, Mounties on Vancouver Island said the children's father contacted investigators and assured them the kids were safe.

But Azer said she believes her kids are in danger because of their father's connections with an Iranian separatist group which has advocated for Kurdish rights in Iran. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alison Azer holds a press conference in Ottawa on July 5. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sharvahn Azer, Rojevahn Azer, Saren Azer, Dersim Azer and Meitan Azer THE CANADIAN PRESS/FACEBOOK

VICTORIA

Judge rules against tent city

A judge has ordered the shut down of a camp on the lawn of Victoria's courthouse where about 100 people have been living since last fall.

Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson of the B.C. Supreme Court said conditions have deteriorated at the so-called tent city.

"I have come to the conclusion that the encampment is unsafe for those living there and for the neighbouring residents and businesses and cannot be permitted to continue," he wrote in his decision.

The ruling grants the province an injunction to shut down the camp over the next several weeks.

It was the second time the government had applied for an injunction. Hinkson denied the original application in April.

Conditions changed between the two applications, Hinkson said, adding that violence and criminal activity at the camp have "markedly increased" in recent months.

"There is evidence that members of an organized and criminal street gang have been present at the encampment, and at one point were resident there," he said. Neighbours have also reported seeing drug paraphernalia, used condoms and evidence of rats around the site in recent months, the ruling said.

Hinkson ordered campers to leave as soon as they can and move into housing made available by the province.

He also ordered all fences and obstructions be removed immediately. THE CANADIAN PRESS

DELTA

Burns Bog fire is now 60 per cent contained, says fire chief

A firefighting plane flies above Burns Bog on Sunday. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Weather is not considered a factor in the cause of a wildfire at a unique peat bog in Delta, B.C., as crews contained about 60 per cent of the blaze on Tuesday, the fire chief says.

Dan Copeland said investigators arrived on the scene of the 78-hectare fire in Burns Bog on Tuesday morning but it could be several weeks before its cause can be determined.

A light drizzle was helping firefighters on Tuesday as they worked to fully contain the blaze, which started Sunday, by the end of the day, he said.

Highway 17 is expected to reopen by Friday. An evacuation order affecting about a dozen businesses at the Tilbury Industrial Park was lifted Tuesday.

Mayor Lois Jackson said it was a "scary moment" when the fire jumped the highway into the industrial area, which includes a forest products company and a chemicals business.

"We didn't really say that in the beginning because I didn't think it would be a positive thing to do," Jackson said. "But that industrial area is full of many things and we were very concerned at the time that that was happening."

She said the fire burned an area where containers were stored but crews were able to save businesses.

Delta remains under a state of local emergency so first responders can get access to private land, Jackson said.

She said Burns Bog was taken over as a conservation area between 2001 and 2004 by the municipality, the province, the federal government and Metro Vancouver, a regional government made up of local mayors. Delta is responsible for fire and maintaining the water table at the bog, Jackson said.

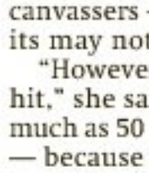
"The one thing we do not want to happen is have people in the bog," she said. "Usually where people go, you can find fire. It is a place for creatures and flora and fauna, but it's not a place for people."

Most of Burns Bog is closed to the public, but an area of about 60 hectares called the Delta Nature Reserve is open for viewing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Charities will 'take a hit'

CANADA POST

Non-profits fear donations could plummet with postal lockout



David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

Vancouver charities anxiously braced for mail disruptions Tuesday, after Canada Post gave its required three-day notice it will lock posties out of their workplaces as early as Friday.

Last week, the Wilderness Committee's development and program director, Beth Clarke, made the difficult decision to cancel a 4,000-piece mail-out to Ontario because of the looming labour dispute, the second postal lockout in five years.

"It's a pretty significant thing to do," she told Metro in a phone interview. "But we didn't want to take the risk of our mail getting stuck in limbo."

She said the organization is at least fortunate as one of the few charities still fundraising through door-to-door canvassers — other non-profits may not be so lucky.

"However, we'll still take a hit," she said. "It could be as much as 50 per cent or higher — because online donations are something only some people are used to doing.

"And it's not like you can courier people their membership renewals through FedEx. It's not affordable. We rely on Canada Post extensively as the only affordable option."

Canada Post explained its decision to close down service starting Friday because of "negative and escalating" impacts caused by "uncertainty caused by the prolonged negotiations and the union's strike mandate," referring to an overwhelming June 26 vote by the union's 50,000 members to authorize a strike.

The Canada Post labour dispute has escalated with a 72-hour lockout notice. JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **It's not like you can courier people their membership renewals through FedEx. It's not affordable. We rely on Canada Post extensively as the only affordable option.** Beth Clarke

"Customers are already looking to avoid the risk of a work disruption," the Crown corporation said in a statement Tuesday, adding that its largest e-commerce customers had slashed parcel delivery by 75 per cent, and mail volume had dropped by half.

"Well, of course people aren't sending anything," said the Canadian Union of Postal Workers national president Mike Palacek in a phone interview. "They're out there telling (the public) they won't deliver them.

"Management is doing their best to blame this on us. But we've been clear from the beginning that we want a negotiated collective agreement without a labour dispute. That's still our aim — we have no plans to issue a strike notice."

Gender equity is a top bargaining thorn, Palacek said, arguing that women postal workers earn 28 per cent less than their male counterparts, since urban workers earn more than rural and suburban workers who are mostly women.

Canada Post said the pay gap resulted from differences in the amount of work done by urban versus rural employees, not their gender.

The union head also said the potential closure of nearly 500 urban retail outlets and other service cost-saving measures are not negotiable.

"We've been taking cuts for years now at a time when Canada Post is actually doing quite well," he said.

"We simply see no justification for the cuts they're putting forward."

The postal firm, however, said its June 25 contract offers were "final" and "represent a fair and reasonable framework for settlements."

"The company also informed CUPW that the union's more than $1 billion in demands were unaffordable and therefore rejected," it said in a statement.

As the clock ticks to Friday, both Canada Post and CUPW say their negotiators are working around the clock to reach a deal.

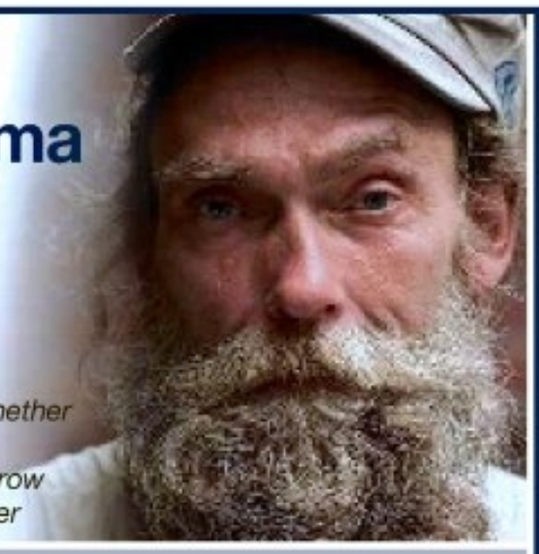
But mail-dependent business and charities aren't waiting to see whether this summer sees a repeat of the 2011 lockout.

"I hope Canada Post sees the needs of charities across this country," the Wilderness Committee's Clarke said, "and not use a lockout as a bargaining chip. Because we really need the postal service every day.".

Community Mental Health and Addictions Worker Diploma

Community Mental Health and Addictions Workers assist individuals with mental health, housing and addiction challenges by encouraging and supporting them in their daily lives. Community Mental Health and Addictions Workers work in shelters, transitional housing, single residential occupancy hotels, supportive permanent housing, outreach programs, life skills services, recreation and wellness programs, food programs, health services, and recovery and treatment facilities.

"For the first time in my life, I know my purpose … to help those in need. Whether that help is a shelter bed, a hot meal, or to lend an ear in times of emotional distress, I love going to work day in, day out. Thanks for helping this spark grow into a flame Stenberg!." – **Troy Balderson,** *Mental Health & Addiction Worker*



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Dog helps robots stop superbug

VANCOUVER GENERAL

Owner trains Angus to sniff out C. difficile after falling ill

A Vancouver hospital is targeting C. difficile infections by deploying a detection dog to sniff out the superbug that's notorious for spreading in health facilities.

Angus, a two-year-old English springer spaniel, is believed to be the world's only dog trained to track the scent of the potentially deadly bacterium in hospitals.

His skill will enhance the capabilities of three cleaning robots used by Vancouver General Hospital to eradicate C. difficile.

"He's extremely persistent; he's very independent; nothing stops him," his owner, Teresa Zurberg, told reporters Tuesday after leading Angus through an odour-detection demonstration.

C. difficile attacks people with immune systems weakened by antibiotics. Its most severe effects can require colon surgery and even lead to death.

Hospitals in the Vancouver region treat about 700 cases each year, with about 30 per cent originating outside facilities, said Dr. Elizabeth Bryce, medical director for infection control with Vancouver Coastal Health.

Canada's first C. difficile sniffing dog, Angus, searches a mock patient room with his trainer Teresa Zurberg, a former C. difficile patient, during a demonstration at Vancouver General Hospital on Tuesday. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Clostridium difficile is a bacteria that is able to form spores. Therefore, it is resistant to a lot of our cleaning agents and it can persist in the environment for a long period of time," Bryce said.

> **I told him, 'If it's got a smell, I can teach a dog to find it.'**
> Teresa Zurberg

Vancouver General already uses three UV-light disinfecting robots, but they can't possibly cover the entire hospital, she said.

"We can now use Angus to help us detect the reservoirs, and then we can use the additional cleaning and the ultraviolet light a little more strategically."

Angus will start by working in areas where he can search with few distractions, such as unoccupied patient rooms, medication rooms and hallways, Bryce said.

Zurberg, who is a certified trainer of bomb and drug-detecting dogs, came up with the idea with her husband after she nearly died from a C. difficile infection three years ago.

Her husband Markus Zurberg, who works as a patient safety coordinator for Vancouver Coastal Health, found an article online about a dog named Cliff in Amsterdam who was trained to sniff C. difficile on patients. He posed the possibility to his wife of training a dog to work in hospitals.

"I told him, 'If it's got a smell, I can teach a dog to find it,'" she said.

They acquired Angus in Montana and Teresa Zurberg trained him for about 18 months.

She said Angus has the same risk of contracting C. difficile as humans, but she's not worried because his immune system is not compromised.

"It's a calculated risk, and he's at very low risk to get it," she said, adding Angus is seen by a veterinarian regularly.

She hopes his high success rate will prompt other health authorities to get dogs trained to detect C. difficile. THE CANADIAN PRESS

HAIR LOSS?

HF LASER SKIN CLINICS IS A CANADIAN COMPANY DEVOTED TO THE ANALYSIS OF NON-DISEASED HAIR PROBLEMS. A number of men and women experience Hair Loss and Scalp Disorders that will lead to baldness.

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REAL ESTATE

Runaway housing market hits minor speed bump

New figures on housing sales across Metro Vancouver reveal a modest slowdown, but the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver says the market is still booming and prices continue to climb.

Residential property sales in Metro Vancouver totalled 4,400 in June, an increase of about 0.5 per cent compared to one year earlier but a drop of nearly eight per cent since May.

Despite the month-to-month plunge, the real-estate board says sales remained well above the 10-year sales average for June, making it one of the hottest on record.

Dan Morrison, president of the real-estate board, says more homes have been listed for sale in Greater Vancouver over the last four months than during any other four-month period over the past decade.

But he says the imbalance between supply and demand continues to create a seller's market.

Real-estate board figures also show the benchmark price for all residential properties in Metro Vancouver was $917,800 last month, a 32 per cent jump since June 2015.

Despite a month-to-month plunge, sales remained well above the 10-year average for June. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The benchmark price for detached homes continues to outstrip that mark over the same period, the board says in a news release.

Sales of single homes fell 19 per cent compared to June 2015, but the benchmark price jumped almost 39 per cent over the same period.

Buyers showed more interest in apartments, with sales up about 19 per cent, while prices climbed 25 per cent to $501,100, the real-estate board says.

Townhouse sales also moved up seven per cent year-over-year, with prices up 28 per cent from June 2015 to $656,900.

Real-estate board figures show about 7,800 properties listed for sale on the multiple listing system in Metro Vancouver, a roughly 40 per cent decline compared to June 2015, and a one per cent increase from May.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kayaker wants ban lifted on unmotorized boats

BURRARD INLET

Harbour patrol escorts paddler out of off-limits area

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

When Mandy Lewis launched the new 18-foot ocean-worthy kayak from downtown Vancouver's Crab Park last week and hugged the shoreline towards Stanley Park, the last thing she expected was to get pulled over by authorities' blaring sirens.

An experienced kayaker, she admitted jokingly she was going "pretty fast" that Tuesday last week — but mused that surely she wasn't speeding.

"'Get out of the water,'" she described the harbour patrol officer ordering her from his boat. "'You've got to go back. There's no personal use boats allowed between the two bridges.'"

That was news to her. It was also news to the Crab Park-goers who witnessed her get escorted back by harbour patrol.

"I assumed that it was totally fine," she told Metro in an interview, as she looked across the Burrard Inlet, bustling with sailboats, motorboats, tugboats, and the SeaBus. She acknowledged that frequent industrial and ferry traffic posed a challenge for small boaters like her, but said that's what safety guidelines are for. "I've seen people using all kinds of boats out here, including non-motorized boats.

"I didn't understand what the problem was. I explained I wasn't hanging out here, I'm just going from this park to the other park."

Experienced paddler Mandy Lewis is calling for a permitted lane or shoreline exception for recreational boaters between Lions Gate Bridge and the Second Narrows. DAVID P. BALL/METRO

A spokeswoman for the Port of Vancouver, Rachel Wong, explained in an email that — with the exception of the shore off Coal Harbour, used by rowers — "there are restrictions on kayaking, paddling, jetskiing, waterskiing, anchoring and fishing in the busy port area of the inner harbour."

The no-go area stretches from the mouth of the Capilano River just west of the Lions Gate Bridge, all the way east past the Second Narrows Bridge, she said.

A port guide published in January also warned of "turbulent seas in both narrows" beneath the Lions Gate and Ironworkers Memorial bridges — and therefore "no pleasure craft under sail or oars may transit either narrows."

Lewis said she's aware of the risky waters through the narrows, but said the Burrard Inlet should be a place that all types of marine users can use safely, with caution.

"This is our natural infrastructure," she argued. "If we're not allowed to frolic here, or they don't want people out in the middle, that's fine.

"At the very least there should be a lane, or they say stick to the shoreline and don't go across. Everybody can get along, if people watch out. Everyone should be able to share this natural infrastructure with ease."

CRIME

No parole for dangerous offender with long record

The national parole board has denied release to a man who sexually assaulted a pregnant and mentally challenged sex-trade worker in a remote area outside Kamloops.

Dennis Bragg, 50, applied for either day or full parole. He is classified as a dangerous offender who is serving an indeterminate sentence that began in 2013.

Bragg has a record of violent sexual assaults dating from 1993 against his wife, an acquaintance, a stranger and the sex-trade worker seven years ago.

Bragg's release was opposed by his case management team with the Correctional Service of Canada.

"According to file information, you do not accept responsibility for the index offence and the CSC reports that you take limited responsibility for your previous offending," the parole board's report said.

"The CSC is not supportive of day or full parole at this time and does not believe your risk is manageable in the community."

Bragg has completed courses for sexual offenders while in prison.

> The Correctional Service of Canada does not believe your risk is manageable in the community.
> The parole board's report

However, the parole board highlighted a number of psychological reports that indicate Bragg is at a high risk to reoffend.

He was first convicted for multiple sexual assaults against his wife beginning in 1993.

Two years later, an acquaintance hired Bragg to do renovations on his house.

When the man was away, Bragg slipped into his girlfriend's bed and tried to sexually assault her.

Bragg was given a 34-month sentence and released in 2000. Soon afterwards, he was convicted of impaired driving and drug possession on two separate occasions.

Two years later, Bragg was convicted of assault causing bodily harm and sexual assault. He tied up a woman for several days and sexually assaulted her. She suffered bruises and lacerations all over her body.

After being released in 2008, Bragg moved to Kamloops.

A year later, he sexually assaulted the young sex-trade worker, who had limited mental ability and was addicted to crack cocaine. She testified in court that she feared for her life. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Police incident at Pacific Highway border crossing

One person was taken into custody Tuesday after a police incident at the Pacific Highway border crossing in Surrey.

RCMP say they received reports from the Canada Border Services Agency that a vehicle failed to stop while heading into Canada. Police say the suspect allegedly had a firearm.

The Mounties followed the vehicle into south Surrey until it turned and headed back toward the border crossing. It was stopped on the U.S. side and U.S. officials took an American citizen into custody. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Marine biologist decries salmon farming licences

A B.C. marine biologist says a federal decision to grant six-year licences to open-net salmon farming operations along the coast does not make sense.

Alexandra Morton says the decision flies in the face of scientific evidence showing wild salmon are being put at serious risk.

She says she has no doubt that viruses and sea lice from salmon farms are hurting wild salmon populations.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fraser Health Authority hospitals honoured

The Fraser Health Authority says its 12 hospitals across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley have received a coveted honour recognizing outstanding trauma care.

Health Minister Terry Lake says the health authority's regional trauma services program has received Accreditation Canada's Trauma Distinction Award, recognizing clinical excellence and outstanding leadership in trauma services.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fire destroys Nanaimo pub of Man of Steel fame

Fire has destroyed a defunct Nanaimo pub that was featured in the 2013 Superman movie Man of Steel.

The blaze at the Cassidy Inn Pub started late Monday night, with flames quickly engulfing the whole building, which collapsed after about 90 minutes.

A Nanaimo RCMP spokesman says investigators are working to determine the cause of the fire. THE CANADIAN PRESS

FORT MCMURRAY

Wildfire under control

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

The Fort McMurray Wildfire is now considered to be under control, according to the province's wildfire officials.

On Tuesday, Alberta Wildfire thanked firefighters and partners for tackling a massive fire that forced more than 80,000 to flee Fort McMurray and neighbouring communities in early May.

"It's a great day," said Laura Stewart, wildfire information officer with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. "Our firefighters have been working hard for a long time."

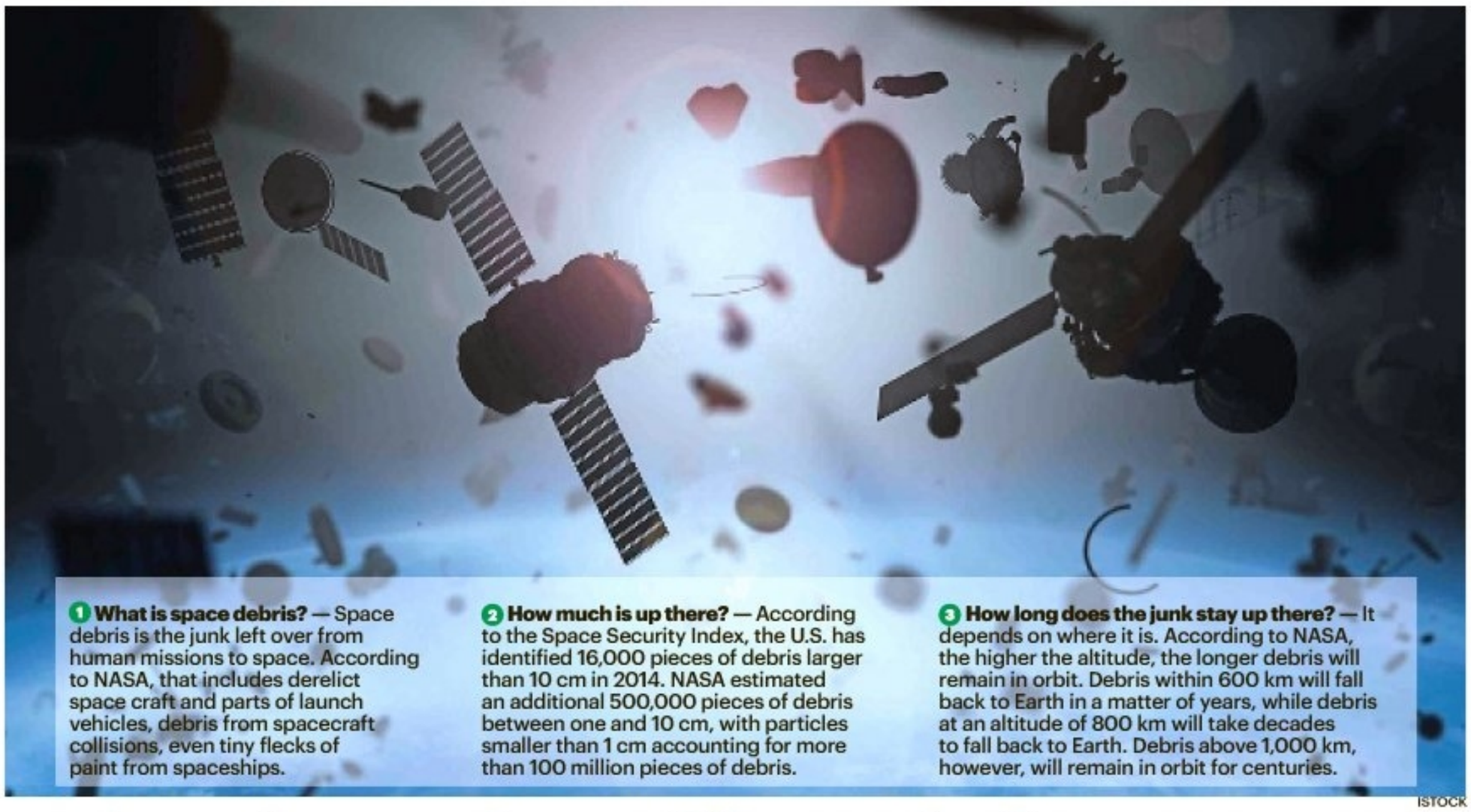
Many Fort McMurray residents have since moved back into the city to rebuild their lives, some finding their homes destroyed while others received little damage.

Officials have said the wildfire destroyed about 10 per cent of the town, turning the communities of Beacon Hill, Waterways and Abasand into rubble.

Stewart said firefighters have fought a lengthy battle, as it's been almost two months since the blaze was initially detected on May 1.

"That's meant a lot of hard work and support from our national partners," Stewart said. "It's something they've been working hard towards."

A giant fireball south of Fort McMurray on May 7. THE CANADIAN PRESS



1 What is space debris? — Space debris is the junk left over from human missions to space. According to NASA, that includes derelict space craft and parts of launch vehicles, debris from spacecraft collisions, even tiny flecks of paint from spaceships.

2 How much is up there? — According to the Space Security Index, the U.S. has identified 16,000 pieces of debris larger than 10 cm in 2014. NASA estimated an additional 500,000 pieces of debris between one and 10 cm, with particles smaller than 1 cm accounting for more than 100 million pieces of debris.

3 How long does the junk stay up there? — It depends on where it is. According to NASA, the higher the altitude, the longer debris will remain in orbit. Debris within 600 km will fall back to Earth in a matter of years, while debris at an altitude of 800 km will take decades to fall back to Earth. Debris above 1,000 km, however, will remain in orbit for centuries.

ISTOCK

The hunk of junk in space

SECURITY

Weaponization of space tech is a concern for many

Canadian officials have "serious security concerns" over the increased presence of countries and private companies in the Earth's orbit, documents obtained by Torstar show.

Global Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion was warned in November that satellites enabling everything from telecommunications to national defence are facing a range of threats — from anti-satellite weaponry to pieces of junk floating around the planet.

"The viability of the space infrastructure is increasingly threatened by potential hostile acts from military or strategic opponents, space debris and space weather," state the documents, obtained under access to information law and stamped "secret."

"The challenge of protecting space infrastructure from both natural and man-made threats is compounded by the rapid expansion of both the number of space-faring nations and the uses to which space assets are put."

Department officials note that Canada is "highly dependent" on the network of satellites orbiting Earth for communications and surveillance, weather forecasting, search and rescue, and even urban planning.

The documents note during the Cold War, both the United States and the U.S.S.R. tested anti-satellite weaponry, with varying degrees of success. More recently, China in 2007 and the U.S. in 2008 achieved the capability to destroy satellites in what is called, low Earth orbit. According to NASA, low Earth orbit is 180 km to 2,000 km above the Earth's surface.

> The private sector is increasingly commercializing outer space and performing activities traditionally undertaken by governments.
> Documents obtained by Torstar

But it's not just nation states that are increasingly active in outer space. New hopes for commercializing space travel have emerged in recent years, including PayPal founder Elon Musk's SpaceX company and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin.

According to the documents, Canadian officials are concerned about the "dual-use" nature of space technology — meaning tech that can be repurposed from its original intention to perform other, potentially dangerous functions.

Torstar requested an interview with Global Affairs for this article, but no one was available on Tuesday.

Paul Meyer, a fellow at Simon Fraser University who served in Canada's foreign service for more than three decades, said there appears to be a "revived interest" in the federal government to pursue space security issues.

"Canada used to be quite involved in issues relating to outer space," Meyer said in an interview Tuesday.

"More recently, (there's been) advocacy, active advocacy of the non-weaponization of outer space. This is a kind of key concept: yes, there are military uses in outer space, in terms of satellites that have military functions, but up to now it hasn't become a weaponized environment."

Meyer said when states talk about the "weaponization" of outer space, they're usually talking about weapons that can target other countries' satellites — not, say, some kind of superlaser that could be trained on planetary targets.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

HEALTH

Families with epileptic kids have marijuana treatment seized at border

Alex Repetski gives his daughter Gwenevere oil-based medical marijuana to help control her seizures. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Parents of children suffering from epilepsy say a recent move by Canadian border agents to seize shipments of medical marijuana oil from an American company could have a catastrophic effect on their children's health.

The families have sent letters to the federal government pleading for the border to allow shipments of Charlotte's Web, a type of marijuana oil that has been touted by some researchers as an effective therapy for hard-to-treat forms of epilepsy.

Charlotte's Web — named after a Colorado girl with epilepsy — has very low levels of the psychoactive ingredient tetrahydrocannabinol, but is high in cannabidiol, or CBD.

The families say they have been purchasing the oil from CW Hemp, a company based in Colorado, where marijuana was legalized in 2014. But the company notified the families late last month that it had stopped accepting Canadian orders after "a drastic" increase in the number of shipments seized at the border.

Canada Border Services Agency said it is simply enforcing the law because marijuana is still illegal in Canada.

Alex Repetski uses Charlotte's Web as part of the marijuana oil he concocts at home for his four-year-old daughter, Gwen, who lives with epilepsy that has left her developmentally delayed. He claims the treatment has allowed his daughter to live seizure free for 20 months, and has helped her learn to walk and talk.

The families have asked Health Canada for an exemption to allow shipments across the border.

Sylwia Krzyszton, a spokeswoman with Health Canada, said families can either turn to marijuana oil made in Canada or can apply for an exemption under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. THE CANADIAN PRESS

FESTIVAL TIME TO BREAK THE FAST Children parade on streets in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Tuesday to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr marking the end of Ramadan. GETTY IMAGES

Canadian resident still held in Dhaka

BANGLADESH

Tahmid Hasib Khan being questioned by investigators

A student from the University of Toronto is still in police custody after surviving a hostage crisis and terrorist attack at a café in Bangladesh last weekend, his cousin told Torstar.

Tahmid Hasib Khan, 22, has been held at a police station in the capital Dhaka since he was detained for questioning more than 72 hours ago, when security forces stormed the Holey Artisan Bakery to end an 11-hour hostage crisis, Khan's cousin Rasheek Ishtahim said in an interview Tuesday.

While Khan has spoken with his parents by phone, no family has been allowed to see him, Ishtahim said. The family is calling on Ottawa to help clear Khan, a Canadian permanent resident, of any involvement in the attack in which 22 people were killed, 18 of them foreign nationals.

Tahmid Hasib Khan FACEBOOK

Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack and its media branch published grotesque photographs of attack victims, according to the monitoring group, SITE. The Bangladeshi government, however, has blamed Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, a domestic Islamist group. The home minister insisted Daesh has no presence in Bangladesh and could not have guided the attack.

"After such incidents usually people are taken to the hospital, but this wasn't the case," said Ishtahim, adding that his family does not know why Khan has been detained so long.

"I think the police might think he was a threat because he was of the same age," he said. "We are trying our best to get him out."

News reports from Bangladesh and across the globe named Khan as one of two hostages still being questioned after the café raid. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IN BRIEF

No charges for Clinton

The FBI lifted a major legal threat to Hillary Clinton's campaign Tuesday, recommending no criminal charges for her handling of classified material in a private email account. But Director James Comey's criticism of her "careless" behaviour revitalized GOP attacks and guaranteed the issue will continue to dog her. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED KINGDOM

Conservatives start choosing new leader

The race to succeed Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron intensified Tuesday as Britain grappled with growing signs of economic strain after the vote to leave the European Union.

With the British currency plunging to its lowest point in three decades, Home Secretary Theresa May scored a substantial victory in the first round of voting to determine who will follow Cameron as party leader and prime minister. She garnered just over half the votes cast.

The victor, to be announced Sept. 9, will be charged with leading what are expected to be tense negotiations to extricate Britain from the 28-nation EU bloc. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Firms look for alternatives

POSTAL STOPPAGE

Canada Post rivals plan for boom as lockout looms

Many Canadian businesses that rely on mail orders have been scrambling for weeks to prepare for a potential delivery shutdown at Canada Post.

The Crown corporation said Tuesday it had issued a 72-hour lockout notice to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), raising the spectre of a work stoppage by Friday.

The parcel delivery business has been a major contributor to Canada Post's revenues in the past few years, with volumes growing by 10 per cent in 2015 year-over-year.

Many of those deliveries are from e-commerce businesses that have been forced to make alternative plans to deliver their goods to customers. They're also worried about the long-term costs of doing so if a work stoppage drags on.

"I think I've definitely seen a few more grey hairs this week than normal," said Suneal Pabari, co-founder of coffee subscription service The Roaster's Pack, which is "incredibly dependent" on Canada Post.

The company has been trying for weeks to work out a plan with alternative shippers. Pabari said the rates they've been quoted are 50 to 100 per cent more than what they were paying with Canada Post.

Erin Maynes, CEO of food box delivery service FoodiePages.ca, is similarly worried about the decision to switch to more expensive couriers — especially for those orders going to more remote areas where Canada Post offers the best rates.

A postal worker delivers mail in Ottawa on Tuesday as a labour dispute between the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and Canada Post continues. JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canopy Growth Corp., the company that owns licensed medical marijuana producers Tweed and Bedrocan, has implemented a contingency plan so that patients can continue to get their prescriptions filled. Health Canada's rules state that medical marijuana can only be delivered through the mail, so many companies are dependent on Canada Post.

> **I've definitely seen a few more grey hairs this week.**
> Suneal Pabari

Competitor delivery services are planning for a boom in business. UPS said Tuesday it has already seen an increase in business and that it is ready to take on even more.

At Good Foot Delivery, a Greater Toronto Area public transit-based service, a potential work stoppage is a mixed blessing, said operations co-ordinator Courtney Ayukawa. While it could mean an increase in delivery time because the couriers rely on Canada Post for delivery legs outside the Toronto area, she is also expecting an increase in business.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IPHONE

Organ donor app on way

Apple wants to encourage millions of iPhone owners to register as organ donors through a software update that will add an easy sign-up button to the health information app that comes installed on every smartphone the company makes.

CEO Tim Cook says he hopes the new software will help ease a longstanding donor shortage.

He told The Associated Press that the problem hit home when Apple co-founder Steve Jobs endured an "excruciating" wait for a liver transplant in 2009.

Apple is adding the option to enrol in a national donor registry by clicking a button within the iPhone's Health app, which can be used manage a variety of health and fitness data.

The software will come to all U.S.-based iPhones when the company updates its mobile operating system this fall.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Apple is adding an easy organ donor sign-up button to its iPhone health information app.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATING WEBSITE

Ashley Madison is getting a makeover under new leaders

Ashley Madison, the infidelity dating company that was hit last year by a massive hack, now hopes that a more inclusive, female-friendly site — and new leadership — will help it woo new customers.

The Toronto-based company's planned makeover is part of a broader strategy to rebuild the business that was left in shambles after last summer's security breach, which exposed the personal dealings and financial information of millions of purported clients.

"In 2016, the world is vastly different than it was in 2010," said parent company Avid Life Media's new CEO, Rob Segal.

The company found that roughly 45 per cent of Ashley Madison users are single and the balance were "looking for other experiences and other types of things" besides the infidelity trumpeted under the previous regime, including polyamory, he said.

SURVIVAL

- Avid Life Media's founder and former CEO Noel Biderman left last August in the wake of the cyberattack — which raised questions about whether the company would be able to survive.
- The cyberattack cost Avid about a quarter of its annual revenue.

Segal gave few details about how it aims to appeal to women.

Avid is also looking to purchase other dating sites in an effort to expand, said the company's new president, James Millership.

The company has invested millions in security over the past year, hiring Deloitte to monitor its systems around the clock and striving to achieve the top level of Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard compliance, a benchmark Millership said only a handful of dating sites have reached.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Wednesday, July 6, 2016

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
ON QUESTIONS NO ONE'S ASKING MOMS

Obscured beneath predictable, vapid chatter about baby weight are questions I would desperately like to ask new mothers

There's a certain societal assumption that women with babies aren't very interesting.

Useful, perhaps, in a zookeeper kind of way. But not so much intellectually stimulating. Having revealed themselves to be the owner of a working uterus, they tend to be thought of only as a uterus, or perhaps a being transformed by virtue of her uterus into a slave finely tuned to the rhythms of eating, sleeping and soiling.

Unless, of course, they're a celebrity.

In that case, they become very interesting on one particular point: How did she lose the baby weight!?!?!

I will admit that watching a wealthy woman yo-yo in size from spherical to cylindrical does raise the question. But it's very, very, very easily answered. Like anybody who loses any weight, ever, women lose baby weight via a combination of diet, exercise and God-like force of will. (I guess some might get surgery. Probably some do.)

But it's actually always the exact same story, with a few rotating details that obscure the likely use of starvation. And as a slice of self-help advice, it's a story completely devoid of usefulness to most women who are too busy working and child-rearing to work out eight hours a day, and too poor to pay for a personal chef and personal trainer/baby-weight-loss enforcer, plus a Kim K-endorsed corset.

What is glorious? What is brutal? Tell me every detail that blows away the large, grey fog of 'it's all worth it.'

There's nothing wrong with wanting to fit your wardrobe from nine months ago, obviously, especially if it's full of clothes you actually like. Having never given over my body to the growth and needs of an alien being, I clearly can't relate to the havoc that experience wreaks on far more than waistlines.

my Twitter feed not far behind a CBC News tweet about the model Molly Sims and — you guessed it — her baby weight.

Thorpe's story doesn't mention calorie counting. It's far more devastating than bootcamp regimes. It reads like a kind of wail from a woman who both loves her children and feels

Tell me every detail that blows away the large, grey fog of "it's all worth it" and "hardest job ever" and "you don't need sleep" and "best part of your life" — the platitudes and cheap lines that might feel real and right to parents who use them, but offer no insight, no form, no shape or colour, no edges hard or soft.

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW Please, please, Kim, tell us how you managed to lose the all-important baby weight. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

But headlining new-mom stories with baby-weight woes is a simple, retrograde way to suggest the only priority for new mothers is to be damn hot. As if they could assert their old independence by looking as they once did, and so we never need ask more about the earthquake that is parenthood.

Worse is this: Obscured beneath that inane, predictable, vapid chatter are myriad questions I would desperately like to ask new mothers.

Enter "Mother, Writer, Monster, Maid" by Rufi Thorpe. The essay, which was published by Vela, an online magazine of writing by women tumbled down

imprisoned by them.

"There is a deep, almost suffocating solitude to my days, and yet there is also the California ocean, the flowers, the breeze. It is lovely; it is intolerable; it is both," Thorpe writes.

"I have tried to say it to my husband; I have tried to say, 'I hate my life.' I have tried to say, 'I need help.' I have tried to explain why I am finding being a mother so difficult, but in the face of his questions, my explanations collapse," she goes on. As a writer who's hoping to one day have children, and who's utterly terrified of what that will mean, this is what I want to hear from mothers. What is glorious? What is brutal?

In her essay, Thorpe notes a series of recent articles "that argue that there is an inherent conflict between motherhood and artistic work," an argument at which many creative mothers may or may not bristle. An argument that seems hyperbolic, and exactly the kind of dialogue I am seeking.

Thorpe's essay has an uplifting ending, but that's almost beside the point. Indelicate questions have been asked, by one mother, of herself, and there's nothing self-help about it.

It's only one view, but it's more illuminating than decades of tabloid talk. A single window into motherhood, sans dress size.

Police do belong at Pride, just not too many

Emma Teitel
For Metro

At Toronto's LGBTQ pride parade Sunday, Black Lives Matter staged a 30-minute parade-halting protest, marked by enormous plumes of multicoloured smoke — the result of harmless smoke bombs.

If you were standing anywhere close to the demonstration, it was undeniably beautiful.

But if, like a close friend of mine, you were a few hundred yards from the sit-in, anxiously trying to determine what just happened, you might not have been impressed — you might have been afraid.

You might have thought, as my friend did, with the horror of the Orlando LGBTQ nightclub shooting fresh in his mind, "Why did the parade stop? Is something wrong?"

So it transpired that BLM Toronto, a group that advocates fiercely for "safe spaces," made at least one queer person in their midst feel momentarily, very unsafe.

Of course, instilling fear was not BLM's intention, but the confusion isn't meaningless. It's relevant to a larger question in the aftermath of Gay Pride and BLM Toronto's controversial demand that police officers cease to march in the parade, out of respect to LGBTQ people of colour who feel threatened by their presence.

How should we prioritize the safety of an exceedingly diverse group like the LGBTQ community? And what happens when one community's idea of safety isn't another's?

Let's say, for example, that you're an older white gay guy who can remember a time when police raided bathhouses, but who now, seeing a succession of smiling modern-day cops march in the parade, is buoyed by a newfound sense of pride and, yes, safety.

Should you suddenly regard your positive feelings toward the police as suspect because your transgender peers of colour don't share them?

BLM Toronto would say yes.

I say yes — and no.

Yes, because Pride is and should stay political. It should strive to eradicate injustice. Its work isn't done.

But no, because it is also a celebration of gains won. And today's struggles should not preclude the celebration of yesterday's strides: the public embrace of the LBGTQ community by police.

It's important for kids watching the parade to see that there are queer cops and firefighters marching proud.

But the rage expressed by BLM Toronto is 100 per cent legitimate. Police discrimination disproportionately affects LGBTQ people of colour. Their fear of law enforcement is real and reasonable.

So I'd like to propose a compromise, the kind not yet offered publicly by Pride organizers themselves.

Toronto Pride should not altogether eliminate police presence from the parade. It should significantly reduce it. There are, flat out, too many police officers marching in the parade. (A friend even turned to me during an especially long procession of men and women in blue and said, "Is this a cop parade?")

This is a compromise that might make queer people of colour feel safer — and everyone feel less bored.

Emma Teitel is a national columnist for the Toronto Star

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STARS SPEAKING OUT

Duelling petitions on Jesse Williams: After his BET Awards speech criticized police in America, one petition calls for the Grey's Anatomy star to be fired, another supports Williams, calling him "a brave leader."

Can you be kinda-sorta vegan?

LIFESTYLE

A look at plant-based diets leads to a lesson in labels

Genna Buck
Metro Canada

People come into Kupfert & Kim, a vegan take-out joint with six locations around Toronto, for all sorts of reasons.

Some are looking for a substantial lunch that's healthier than typical fast-food fare, while others are seeking lactose- and gluten-free options, said staff member Jesus Rodriguez. But most have one thing in common, he added: They don't call themselves vegan.

All the items on the restaurant's menu are free of meat, fish and animal by-products like milk, butter and eggs — what's conventionally understood to be vegan.

But almost everyone who was at the busy downtown location on Tuesday at lunchtime said they didn't identify with any dietary label at all. Just two were vegetarian.

The customers were "vegan" that day only incidentally or occasionally. Their reasons for choosing an animal-free lunch or snack ranged from, "It's really fresh and really good," as one woman grabbing a blueberry smoothie said, to, in the case of customer Jeff Mcleod, simply because he really likes the coffee.

DEFINITIONS

Vegan Someone who abstains from foods made from animals or animal by-products like dairy, eggs and honey. Many vegans say veganism extends beyond diet to a lifestyle and philosophy that aims to minimize animal suffering in every way.

Plant-based diet Broadly, this could refer to anyone who mostly eats foods that come from plants. But more recently, "plant-based" has come to refer to people who follow a diet identical to what vegans eat, but who don't choose to adopt the broader philosophy of veganism.

Fruitarian An extreme vegan who follows a high-carbohydrate, low-fat, low-protein diet consisting almost entirely of fruit. This is discouraged by doctors and dieticians.

Staff member Jesus Rodriguez shows off some vegan fare available at Toronto's Kupfert & Kim. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

In the eyes of many self-identified vegans, there's absolutely no such thing as an occasional vegan.

"An occasional vegan … that's like … let me think … that's like saying you're an occasional Buddhist," said Toronto-based life coach Kimberly Carroll, who has been vegan for 10 years. "Veganism is a philosophy. It's about eliminating harm to animals as much as possible. It goes beyond diet."

Carroll doesn't wear silk (from caterpillars), fur, wool or leather, and doesn't go anywhere animals are used for entertainment, like zoos or aquariums.

"I did stomp on a centipede once. I felt bad about it.

Kimberly Carroll has been a vegan for 10 years, and she aims to reduce animal suffering in every aspect of her life

Within the vegan community, the term "plant-based diet" is more commonly used to describe the choice to abstain from all animal products, but not identify with the vegan lifestyle, Carroll explained. (Confusingly, many people who eat animal products once in a while, but are mostly vegan or vegetarian, also say they follow a "plant-based diet.")

The precise definitions of all these terms, it turns out, are hotly contested.

Oakville, Ont. food writer Angela Liddon learned that the hard way last year.

She cooks vegan meals for her family and features them her site, Oh She Glows. But her husband isn't a vegan, and, she explained in a blog post, her infant daughter Adriana won't necessarily be either.

In response to the reader question, "Will you raise your daughter a vegan?" she wrote, "I want her to be able to try any food that she wants to, including the food her dad and family members eat," whether it's vegan or animal-based.

What followed was a deluge of "hateful and threatening" comments accusing her of being not vegan enough and not doing for the vegan movement, Liddon wrote in a follow-up post.

The experience scared her off the word "vegan" altogether.

"I will keep on doing my thing, but without a personal label on my diet or lifestyle," she wrote, adding she plans to continue sharing the same kinds of "crowd-pleasing, plant-based recipes."

Judgemental attitudes, like what Liddon experienced, are troubling to Sandra Veljovic, incoming president of the Veg Club at the University of Toronto. Though she's a strict vegan herself, Veljovic said being militant about labels "makes us seem a lot less accessible and perpetuates the stereotype of vegans being super extreme."

No one is 100 per cent successful at being vegan, Carroll said, because it's nigh on impossible to go through life without causing any animal suffering at all.

Case in point: "I did stomp on a centipede once," she confessed. "I felt bad about it."

Although she is extremely conscientious personally, Carroll wants as many people as possible to identify with and feel welcome to join the vegan and vegetarian movements, even if their adherence is not perfectly pure.

"The more folks identify as vegans, the better for vegans," she said, because it will expand the vegan options available and reduce the amount of animal products used. Ultimately she said, "I want animals to not suffer."

SPECIAL EDITIONS

Snacks not worth crossing the border for

Ariel Teplitsky
Torstar News Service

I've got a theory: Oreo regularly introduces unusual flavours, from Strawberry Shortcake to Banana Split, to make us better appreciate the original. It's the New Coke approach to marketing. That cola was so widely detested, it gave a huge boost in sales to the original when "Classic Coke" was reintroduced.

Still, that doesn't explain the sheer number of Oreo cookie varieties that have been developed around the world, from fruit punch to green tea to cookie dough.

It used to be so simple, with little choice beyond the original and the "Double Stuf" cookies — and even the latter proved you couldn't improve on the source. Double Stuf is too much stuf.

In Canada, we are still relatively deprived of exotic Oreo flavours, so on a recent trip down south I stocked up on four kinds: Red Velvet, S'mores, Fruity Crisp and Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Oreos.

And how are they? For the most part, Canadians aren't missing out. The Red Velvet has a "cream cheese" filling but it contains no dairy, so the taste is overly artificial. The stuffing in the Fruity Crisp is filled with bits of sweet cereal (similar to Froot Loops) and with my first bite I thought this was an inspired triumph of sugary snack food science, but with my second bite I wasn't so sure, and by the third I was beginning to regret ever putting this fake-fruit concoction in my mouth. I swear the aftertaste lingered for at least an hour afterward.

The food alchemists had better success fusing Oreo with S'mores — though why didn't they call them S'moreos? Seems like a missed opportunity. The right flavours are there, all of them a bit too sweet, and I wanted the stuffing to have more of a marshmallow consistency.

And last, the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Oreos, which happens to be the greatest of the bunch. By fusing the two familiar confections, they've created something exciting and new — I would prefer to eat these over conventional Oreos and Reese's.

Some Oreo flavours you can't get in Canada. TORSTAR NEW SERVICE

After the fast ... it's time for the feast

RECIPE

End of Ramadan opens the door to the dessert delights of Eid

As Ramadan comes to an end, Muslims are celebrating Eid al-Fitar, a day of feasting following a month of fasts. As with any global holiday, the treats vary from place to place. The Somalis have buskud (shortbread); Pakistanis make sheer khurma (vermicelli cooked in sweet milk); and the Turkish and Bosnians bake baklava.

Here's a glimpse into some other home-made Eid treats Canadians are digging into this week.

Sawine (left) is a Trinidadian dessert of buttery toasted vermicelli cooked in sweet milk then topped with nuts and dried fruit while **Kahk** is a very old dessert eaten by Egyptians during Eid. KARON LIU/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Trinidadian Sawine
(Makes 8 to 10 servings)

Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago make up just about 10 per cent of the population, but Eid is a public holiday and families take the day off to don new clothes, visit the mosque (Trinidad has 85 and Tobago has two) and cook up a storm, says Lazina Aziz, 77, who was born in Trinidad before coming to Canada 20 years ago. She makes a sweet puddinglike dessert called sawine (pronounced "sa-wine"). Thin vermicelli noodles are toasted to a golden brown in butter, then cooked in sweetened milk flavoured with spices, nuts, dried fruit and other toppings.

Ingredients:
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) cut vermicelli
- 1 cinnamon stick or 1 tsp (5 mL) ground cinnamon
- 6 whole green cardamon pods
- 2 cups (500 mL) each: boiling water, evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) sweetened condensed milk
- Raisins, for garnish
- Chopped toasted almonds, for garnish

Directions:
1. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add vermicelli, cinnamon and cardamon. Stir constantly, covering noodles in butter and toasting until fragrant, about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove cinnamon stick and cardamon pods.

2. Add boiling water; continue to cook on medium until noodles are tender and most of the water has evaporated, about 10 to 15 minutes.

3. Reduce heat to low. Stir in evaporated and condensed milks until warm.

4. Divide into bowls. Top with raisins and chopped almonds. Serve immediately.

Egyptian Kahk
(Makes 36 cookies)

In Egypt, the essential dessert for Eid is kahk (pronounced "ka-hk" with a strong emphasis on the H), a crumbly cookie stuffed with a sweet paste and covered in powdered sugar.
"My grandma would spend hours kneading the dough, but this was before the days of the KitchenAid," says Nora Hindy, 33, a teacher.

Ingredients (for the walnut filling):
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) each: water, all-purpose flour, honey, toasted sesame seeds
- 3/4 cup (180 mL) crushed and toasted walnuts
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) rosewater, optional

Directions:
1. In a small pan over very low heat, whisk water, flour and honey together until well incorporated and smooth. Fold in sesame seeds and walnuts; stir in rosewater if using. Remove from heat.

2. Let mixture cool to room temperature to form a paste.

Ingredients (for the dough):
- 4 cups (1 L) all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cups (310 mL) ghee or clarified butter
- 2 tsp (10 mL) powdered sugar, plus more for dusting cookies
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) ground mahaleb
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) each: ground aniseed, ground fennel seed
- 1 1/2 tbsp (2 packets) instant dry active yeast
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) lukewarm water
- Walnut filling

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 375F (190C). In a stand mixer with hook attachment, mix flour and ghee on low speed until dough is evenly mixed but still crumbly.

2. In the meantime, in a mixing bowl stir together sugar, mahaleb, aniseed, fennel seed and yeast. Add water and mix until yeast starts to bubble. Cover with plastic wrap and let sit for 10 minutes, or until mixture doubles in size.

3. Add yeast mixture to flour mixture. Mix dough on low speed until just combined into a solid ball. Add more water if dough is too dry.

4. Divide dough into tablespoon-sized balls. Take dough ball and flatten into a disc shape with hand. Scoop 1 teaspoon of walnut filling into centre of flattened dough ball. Roll dough back into a ball. Repeat with remaining dough.

5. Place dough on lined baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes, or until cookies are slightly golden brown.

6. Let cool on a rack; dust generously with powdered sugar.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

Helping towns on the ropes

THE SHOW: Still Standing, Season 2, Episode 3 (CBC)
THE MOMENT: The Titanic joke

Series host Jonny Harris is on stage in Georgetown, PEI. The town is struggling: The timber mill closed in 2007, the shipyard three years later. Harris has been interviewing locals, and he incorporates their stories into his standup routine.

"There were 15 bars here once; now there are none," Harris says. "There were 1,600 people, now there are 650. Proving a direct correlation between alcohol and population." The audience chuckles.

Harris introduces a local who wants pocket cruise ships to stop here. "A pocket cruiser would help," Harris says. "Heck, a canoe would help. Jack and Rose from Titanic clinging to a piece of debris would help — as long as when you fished them out they'd go buy an ice cream."

Jonny Harris CONTRIBUTED

The premise here could not be simpler: Harris arrives in a town beset by adversity, bones up on the history, tapes a few chats. Then he sets up a stage with a map of Canada and a few strings of lights, and delivers his routine — equal parts ribbing, education and boosterism.

The enterprise feels like exactly what the CBC should be doing. That's not usually good news — it smacks of taking your medicine. But Still Standing works. Harris and his subjects react to one another with good-natured charm, while the seriousness of the towns' plights makes humour feel like a brave choice.

Props to Harris: He hears the same hard tale in every small town — the end of fishing and lumber gutted them — yet finds fresh jokes every time.

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER

THIS WEEK: Canned Tuna

A tuna fish sandwich is an easy meal, but the flavoured versions may not be as nutritious.

PICK THIS

Solid White Tuna (Albacore in Water)

Calories 70
Fat 1g
Sodium 170mg

SKIP THIS

Mini Flaked Light Spicy Thai Tuna

Calories 160
Fat 7g
Sodium 470mg

HERE'S WHY

Equivalent to: as much sodium as two slices of Primo Vegetarian Pizzas (hand-tossed crust) from Panago Pizza.

Canned tuna is an easy way to make a meal. While there may not seem to be much of a difference between these two cans, take a closer look. By selecting the Spicy version, you're adding sunflower oil, sugar and extra salt, which more than doubles the calories and sodium, as well as greatly magnifying the fat. Pick the tuna packed with water; you can add some light mayonnaise, diced veggies and herbs to enhance the flavour.

Add slices of heirloom tomatoes to your pizza for a summery, light pie tonight. KARON LIU/TORONTO STAR

PIZZA

Better than takeout

Simply brush a store-bought, thin pizza crust with olive oil and lay a single layer of sliced heirlooms, added stripes of prosciutto, minced garlic, basil leaves, crumbled feta, salt and pepper. It's filling, light-tasting and ready in 20 minutes from start to finish.

Heirloom Tomato Pizza
Makes one pizza.

Ingredients:
- 1 store-bought, ready-made thin pizza crust
- Olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 to 2 medium heirloom tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 3 to 4 slices prosciutto
- Freshly torn basil leaves
- 1 tbsp crumbled feta
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 F (220 C) or temperature indicated on pizza instructions.

2. Rub garlic clove all over pizza crust. Lightly brush crust with olive oil. Mince garlic clove and sprinkle evenly over crust.

3. Arrange sliced tomatoes in a single layer around crust. Top with prosciutto, basil and feta. Brush more oil. Season with salt and pepper.

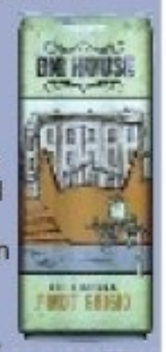
4. Place pizza directly on the middle rack of the oven; bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until prosciutto and tomato edges begin to crisp and brown. Remove from oven and serve. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

LIQUID ASSETS

Can wine work like this?

As adventurous as wine fans can be, there are still some hurdles many just won't jump. The most contentious is packaging.

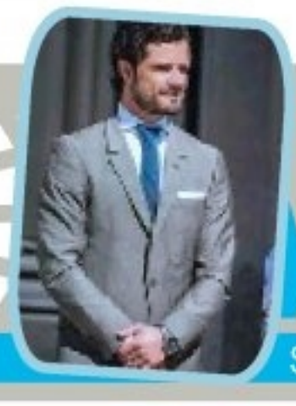
While the convenience of bag-in-box wines have seen even the snobbiest of wine snobs embrace the concept; wine from a PET bottle or Tetra Pak never turned anyone's corkscrew.



Though not the first to take a kick at the can, California's Big House has just released two wines that come wrapped in aluminum.

Straight from the can The Birdman Pinot Grigio (250mL, $3.99-$4.99) is a surprisingly full-figured white with ripe, citrus fruit, while the Cardinal Zin Zinfandel (250mL, $3.99-$4.99) is a red packed with blackberry and plum. Easy to transport and simple to serve, both should be a hit at any summer gathering. PETER ROCKWELL

metro WHEELS
Your essential daily news



Swedish Prince Carl Philip designs Volvo Polestar Art Car

Frugal Focus rewards steady drivers

ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

REVIEW

Fun to drive in medium to slow traffic

Sami Haj-Assaad
AutoGuide.com

Ford is sticking all kinds of EcoBoost engines into its compact cars, but this one isn't the hairy, rally-inspired Focus RS you've heard all about, and it's certainly not the tail-happy Focus ST that lights up the track.

While those two turbocharged versions of the Focus are all about speed, the one I'm testing is the polar opposite. With its force-fed three-cylinder engine, you need to take it slow and steady. And if you drive this car slow and steady, it will reward the driver with extra miles per gallon.

Ford and the EPA suggest that the best the 1.0-litre EcoBoost can do in the Focus is a whopping 35 mpg. It might not be as exciting as what the Focus RS and Focus ST can do, but for some people, this frugalness can be a thrill in its own right.

First seen in the U.S. on the Fiesta, the engine makes 123 hp and 125 lb-ft of torque and is paired to a six-speed transmission, either an automatic or a manual. Manual models are capable of getting 35 mpg combined, while automatics earn just 32 mpg combined. Automatic start-stop helps improve things in traffic. Canadians get both the sedan and hatchback body styles.

The car feels pretty responsive in the mid-range, making it surprisingly fun to drive in slow to medium-speed traffic. Ask much more of it, say, passing on the highway, and you're going to be wanting more power and for it to arrive much sooner. And while you can jump through traffic lights with a bit of gusto, doing so comes at the cost of fuel economy. This 1.0-litre EcoBoost needs you to take things a bit slowly. Simply put, the power plant is only suitable for staying right at the speed limit and driving gingerly and smoothly.

Despite the requirement to be driven sedately, the car is quite fun and responsive to drive. The steering feels tight and well weighted, giving a confident feel to the driver.

The interior and exterior haven't been radically changed this year. The car avoids looking too stale thanks to a new bumper and LED daytime running lights. The interior has also been updated, with Ford offering the new Sync 3 infotainment system and USB ports that are said to help charge your devices twice as quickly as the old units.

There are some issues to address. For starters, it's not easy to achieve the car's advertised fuel economy numbers, and doing so requires some unrealistic driving habits.

If you're going to get an EcoBoost Focus, you should either get a fun one like the ST or RS, or else stick with the naturally aspirated model.

THE CHECKLIST | 2016 FORD FOCUS 1.0-LITRE ECOBOOST

THE BASICS

Engine: 1.0-litre three-cylinder
Power: 123-hp, 125 lb-ft of torque
Transmission: six-speed manual or automatic
Fuel Economy (L/100 km): **Manual:** 7.8 city, 5.7 highway, 6.8 combined. **Automatic:** 8.5 city, 5.9 highway, 7.3 combined
Price (CAD): Starts at $21,199

LOVE IT

- Responsive engine
- Driving dynamics
- Looks good

LEAVE IT

- Slow
- Hard to net MPGs
- 2.0L is easier to drive and faster

3 CLASSIC RIDES THAT SPIKED IN VALUE OVER THE PAST YEAR

The world's leading insurance provider for classic vehicles, Hagerty, has released a list of the hottest collector cars of the summer. If you've been keeping your eye on any of these, you might want to act fast. JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

1 1997 Ferrari F355 Spider

If you want to drop the top on a Ferrari, you might be surprised to hear what the F355 is worth today. The 1997 Ferrari F355 Spider is currently worth $90,100 in top condition, a noticeable increase from its January 2016 value of $77,500. But this particular model is on the rise, considering in January 2015 it was worth around $51,000! An excellent-condition one is worth around $68,900.

2 1987 Mercedes-Benz 560SL

Perhaps the Ferrari is too flashy and you prefer something more classy. The 1987 Mercedes-Benz 560SL is a primary candidate, and its value is quickly rising. Currently a top-condition model will run you around $75,700. It's also one of the biggest jumps on the list, since the 1987 Mercedes-Benz 560SL was valued around $32,500 in January 2015.

3 1990 BMW M3

But the car seeing the biggest jump in the past year is the 1990 BMW M3. You might be shocked to hear that a top-condition model begs a price of $121,000 in today's world and even an excellent-condition has a price tag of around $76,100. It has been on the rise since January 2015, when a top condition was valued around $69,000. In January 2016, Hagerty says, it would fetch around $115,000.

metro SPORTS

In the first 96 hours of free agency, NBA teams committed about $3 billion toward contracts — that's almost $9,000 a second over four days

Bringer of Royal pain

MLB

Donaldson belts 2 homers, scores 4 runs in Blue Jays' win

Less than an hour after being named to the American League all-star team for a third straight season, Josh Donaldson continued to prove he belongs among the game's elite.

The Blue Jays third baseman hit two home runs and scored four times to back a solid start from R.A. Dickey as Toronto beat the Kansas City Royals 8-3 on Tuesday.

It was Donaldson's eighth career multi-homer game and fifth with the Blue Jays (47-39).

The 30-year-old was officially 3-for-4 but also reached on a fielder's choice. His four runs scored gave him a Blue Jays pre-all-star game record of 77.

Troy Tulowitzki, with a three-run shot, and Ezequiel Carrera also went deep for Toronto. Edwin Encarnacion drove in a run with a base hit and Kevin Pillar added a sacrifice fly.

Dickey (6-9) scattered four hits, three walks and two runs over seven innings. The knuckleballer also fanned eight en route to his first win of the year at Rogers Centre (1-6).

Cheslor Cuthbert hit a two-run shot and drove in another run for Kansas City (43-40). Chris Young (2-8) shouldered the loss after allowing six runs over 2-1/3 innings.

Encarnacion and right-hander Marco Estrada were also named to the AL all-star team while Canadian left-fielder Michael Saunders was revealed as one of the Final Vote nominees for the last roster spot which will be determined by fans and announced Friday.

Saunders was 2 for 4 with a double in Tuesday's game. The Victoria native is batting .290 on the season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Josh Donaldson admires his first-inning home run against the Royals on Tuesday night in Toronto. TOM SZCZERBOWSKI/GETTY IMAGES

TUESDAY In Toronto

8	3
BLUE JAYS	ROYALS

Five Cubs voted to start in all-star game

The Chicago Cubs became the first team since the 1976 Cincinnati Reds' Big Red Machine to have five players voted as all-star game starters when their entire infield earned the honour Tuesday along with centre-fielder Dexter Fowler.

First baseman Anthony Rizzo, second baseman Ben Zobrist, shortstop Addison Russell and third baseman Kris Bryant also were elected. The only other team to start four infielders was the 1963 St. Louis Cardinals.

Seven Cubs were picked in all, with Jake Arrieta and Jon Lester selected for the National League pitching staff.

Boston has six all-stars. Designated hitter David Ortiz, shortstop Xander Bogaerts and outfielders Jackie Bradley Jr. and Mookie Betts were all elected to start for the American League. Steven Wright and Craig Kimbrel were selected for the pitching staff. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WIMBLEDON

Williams sisters advance to semis

The Williams sisters could be headed for another meeting in a Grand Slam final.

Venus Williams made it back to the Wimbledon semifinals for the first time in seven years on Tuesday, while defending champion Serena Williams advanced to her 10th final four at the All England Club.

Five-time champion Venus, 36, beat Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan 7-6 (5), 6-2, advancing to the semifinals for the first time since 2009 and first time at any major since the 2010 U.S. Open.

A short while later, Serena beat Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia 6-4, 6-4.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **"I want her to win so bad — obviously not in the final if I'm there.**
> Serena Williams

IN BRIEF

Nowitzki, Mavericks agree on 2-year contract

A person with knowledge of the deal says the Mavericks and Dirk Nowitzki have reached agreement on a two-year contract that could get the star forward to 20 seasons in Dallas.

The agreement would be worth roughly $20 million per season with a player option in the second year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada starts Olympic basketball qualifier with win

Toronto Raptors point guard Cory Joseph led Canada to a 77-69 win over Turkey on the opening day of the FIBA Olympic basketball qualifying tournament.

Joseph had 21 points and five assists Tuesday in Manila, Philippines.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Backup goaltender Kuemper stays with Wild

The Minnesota Wild have signed goalie Darcy Kuemper to a one-year, $1.55-million contract.

The Wild announced the signing on Tuesday.

The 26-year-old Kuemper went 6-7-5 with a .915 save percentage and a 2.43 goals-against average for the Wild last season.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kittel sprints to Tour de France stage victory

German rider Marcel Kittel claimed the fourth and longest stage of the Tour de France after a mass sprint on Tuesday.

It was Kittel's ninth career stage win at the Tour.

World champion Peter Sagan finished third and kept the yellow jersey.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Into the fast(er) lane

TRACK AND FIELD

De Grasse takes world-class training into Olympic trials

When Andre De Grasse lines up against the world's fastest men at the Rio Olympics, it will be the punctuation mark on a season that was written in countless training runs down the track at a small college in Arizona.

The Canadian sprint star raised some eyebrows when he upended his training environment just six months out from the Rio Olympics.

The 21-year-old swapped what was essentially a two-man training group at the University of Southern California to become just one of over 100 world-class athletes from 30 countries working with the Altis training centre in Phoenix.

Training against the best in the world on a daily basis, he said, will stand him in good stead when he lines up in Rio.

"Before it was just me and my training partner BeeJay (Lee, his USC teammate)," De Grasse said. "But we both came here, and the atmosphere ... we have guys who are just as fast as us, that push us every day.

"It's really good for us competitively because before you didn't really know where you were at, in practice. But now you can tell, if you're with your training partner or you're near him doing a rep, you know you're in pretty good shape."

The Markham sprinter will be the headliner at this week's Canadian Olympic trials in Edmonton, and he has his eyes on a medal at the Rio Olympics.

He'll also be one of about a dozen Altis athletes, including sprinter Justyn Warner and long jumper Christabel Nettey, competing in Edmonton.

Paradise Valley Community College, the Altis training base, sits in the shadow of Camelback Mountain in a sleepy Phoenix neighbourhood. The giant cacti outside the chainlink fence could pass for onlookers against the glare of the sun.

The athletes arrive in waves — smaller groups make for more effective coaching. They paint a global mosaic in their various national team gear, from Great Britain, India, Japan, Australia, Saint Lucia, Samoa and Canada.

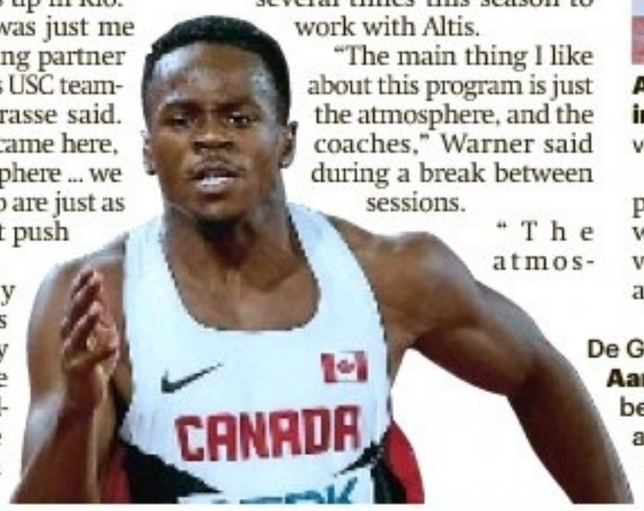
Damian Warner, Canada's world silver medallist in the decathlon, travelled to Phoenix several times this season to work with Altis.

"The main thing I like about this program is just the atmosphere, and the coaches," Warner said during a break between sessions.

"The atmosphere is a little different from what I'm used to. I can pole vault and I'm pole vaulting with a guy (Steve Lewis) who is the British record holder. Then I look over and there's the world record holder in the hurdles, Aries Merritt (of the U.S.). It's just kind of a cool atmosphere, and everybody here is focusing on their own goals, and focusing on Rio, and you can tell, and you can feed off that energy."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Andre De Grasse races to victory in the men's 100 metres during a Diamond League event in Oslo, Norway, on June 9.
VIDAR RUUD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



De Grasse could be pushed by **Aaron Brown**, who recently became just the second Canadian in nearly two decades to run a sub-10-second 100 metres. GETTY IMAGES FILE

SOCCER

End product is only concern for Portugal

EURO 2016 SEMIFINAL SETUP

Don't let Cristiano Ronaldo's devilish grin and chiselled torso fool you. Portugal is the undisputed ugly duckling of the four teams left standing at the European Championship.

While semifinal rival Wales, along with Germany and France, have all impressed with big wins to deservedly reach this stage, Portugal has only joined them after barely squeaking through each round.

Fernando Santos
GETTY IMAGES

And unless Ronaldo can rediscover his scoring touch, Portugal will struggle to find a way past an attack fuelled by Gareth Bale when it plays Wales at the Stade de Lyon on Wednesday.

Portugal coach Fernando Santos, however, doesn't care about style or statistics.

"I would be bothered if I was at home and they were saying Portugal had played well but was no longer at the Euro," Santos said. "We have a goal and we are doing all we can to achieve it. We are not here to play pretty or ugly.

"We are going to take on an excellent opponent, which has more victories and scored more goals than we have, but we believe we are going to win."

How Santos' side has managed to reach its fourth semifinal appearance in the last five continental competitions is something of a mystery.

Portugal has yet to beat an opponent in 90 minutes of regulation play after five matches at Euro 2016.

Portugal limped into the round of 16 after three draws, finishing third in Group F behind Hungary and Iceland. It then needed an extra-time goal from Ricardo Quaresma to see off Croatia 1-0 in one of the poorest matches of the tournament. Next came a quarter-final against Poland that Portugal claimed in a penalty shootout following its finish at 1-1 after 120 minutes.

All told, Portugal has been in the lead for a total of 22 minutes over the course of more than eight hours of football in France.

Yet, here they are, one win away from the final in Paris on Sunday.

Understandably enough, Portugal's players are focusing on the product, not the process.

"Criticism gives us more motivation," said midfielder Danilo, who is likely to start against Wales for the suspended William Carvalho.

"It's not easy, we see it in the news but it motivates us. It makes us determined to prove them wrong."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INJURY NOTE

Pepe yet to get the OK
Coach Fernando Santos says his team will make a match-day decision as to whether central defender Pepe is fit to play.

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RECIPE Grilled Pork Chops with Goat Chees and Apples

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Do your prep in the morning so your chops can spend the day in the fridge marinating. Come dinner time you'll just spend another 10 minutes grilling and this glorious meal will be all yours.

Ready in
Prep time: 2 hours
Cook time: 15 minutes

Ingredients
- 2 cups water
- 1/4 cup Dijon mustard, divided
- 4 thin-cut boneless pork loin chops
- 2 teaspoons extra-virigin olive oil
- 2 granny smith apples, cored and quartered
- 2 tablespoons goat cheese
- salt and freshly ground pepper

Directions

1. In a large, plastic storage bag, combine water, 3 tablespoons mustard, 1 tablespoon salt and pork chops. Shake well and refrigerate for 2 to 4 hours; drain well and discard brine.

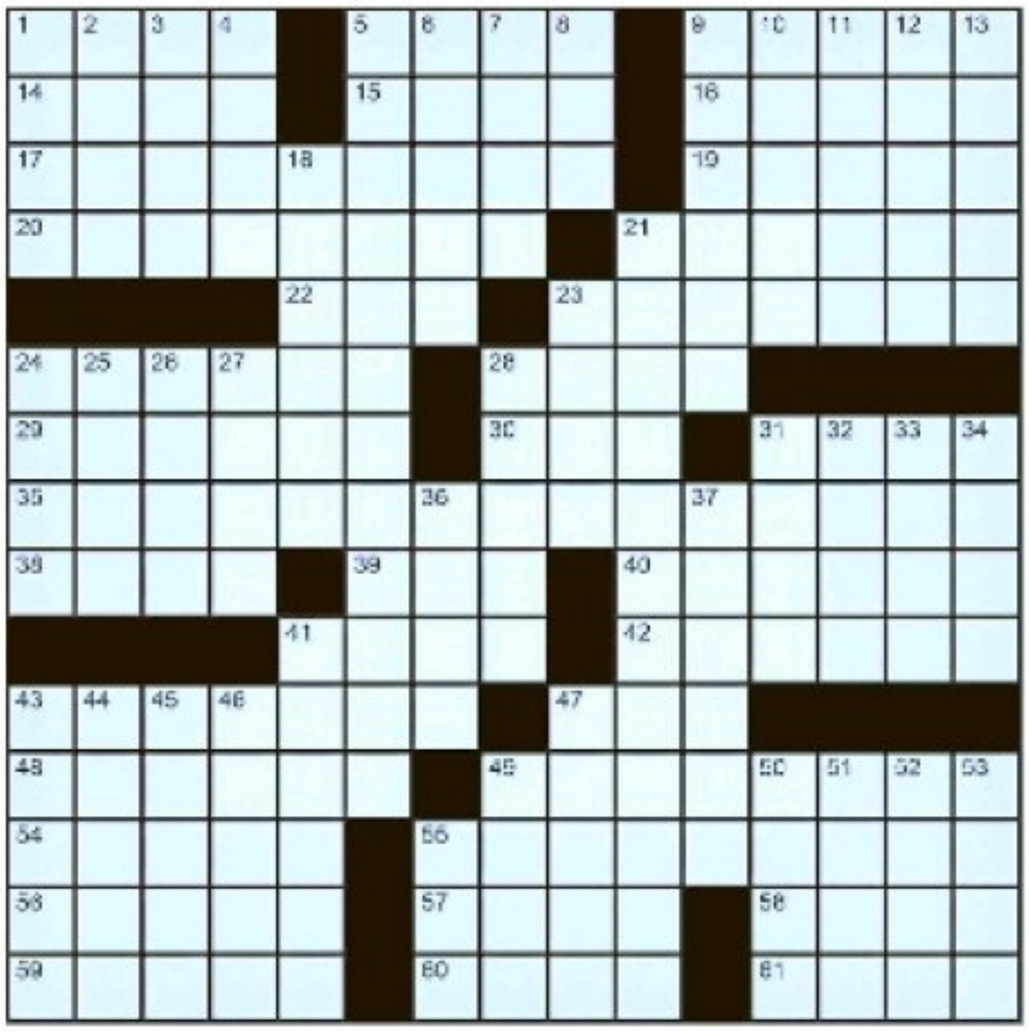
2. Preheat grill to medium high heat. Combine remaining 1 tablespoon of mustard and oil in a small bowl and brush over apple quarters and pork chops.

3. Place on grill, flipping halfway through, until pork is gold brown and cooked through, and apples are charred but still juicy. Apples will lonly need 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer them to plates and then add pork when it is finished. Garnish with goat cheese and serve.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Leaf to Maple branch link
5. Grub
9. Car's stopper
14. Like a hooting bird
15. Five-star
16. Cite
17. What the homeowner is asking for, such as in a real estate ad: 2 wds.
19. Chipmunk's chew
20. Cariole = _-_ carriage
21. Harbour structures
22. Bon _ (Witticism)
23. Shakespeare's fantastical play, The _
24. Particular prickly plant
28. British supermodel Kate
29. Animal Farm author George
30. Deep-into-sleep
31. Swell
35. Canada's 8th Prime Minister: 3 wds.
38. Wild blue yonder's
39. "Cold Mountain" (2003) role
40. Bitterly complained
41. Similar
42. Says "Do this, this and that."
43. Fruity frozen dessert
47. "I Am _" (2001)
48. Ritzy roe on hors d'oeuvres trays
49. Charmed
54. Insurance company gig
55. Whole grain recipe component: 2 wds.
56. Rene Descartes: "Je _, donc je suis." (I think, therefore I am)
57. Hawkeye State
58. Comic actress Madeline
59. Insert
60. "_ 101" (TV show Britney Spears' sister Jamie Lynn starred on)
61. _ Machines (Casino games)

DOWN
1. _ career (Ex-band member's undertaking)
2. _-size bed
3. Other
4. Legendary tale
5. 'Canada's First Lady of Country Music': 2 wds.
6. Operate a crane in a way
7. As soon as...
8. Teensy
9. 19th-century German composer Johannes
10. Post-game analysis
11. "Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler _ her eyes..." - Shakespeare
12. Woodworking cuts
13. Surrealist artist Max
18. Grapefruit-like fruit
21. Hip-and-happening Winnipeg neighbourhood centred around Sherbrook Street: 2 wds.
23. Talk up/boast
24. Flip
25. Mr. Estrada
26. Haywire
27. Sunday church deliveries, for short
28. Erin of "Happy Days"
31. Canadian star of classic TV series "Dark Shadows", Jonathan _
32. Loafing
33. _-do-well
34. Finishes
36. Change in the newsroom
37. Viking ship crew
41. Decreaser
43. Scenic suffix to 'Sea'
44. Tom _ (Robert Duvall's character in 'Godfather' movies)
45. Function to attend
46. Get the shampoo out
47. Lucy _ (Main character in Charlotte Bronte's 1853 novel Villette)
49. 'Switch' suffix
50. Bible-style vessels
51. Oman money
52. Hello Heellloo! Heellllooooo!
53. Autoshop repair
55. Industry, colloquially

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
You will enjoy redecorating where you live or buying beautiful things for home and family. This is a great day to entertain at home. Invite the gang over!

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Your social skills are tops today! Enjoy schmoozing with partners, close friends, siblings and neighbors. This is a strong day for writers and actors, teachers and salespeople.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Trust your moneymaking ideas! This is a good day for business and commerce. Financial deals will be positive. Shopping for beautiful things will please you.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You feel friendly and sociable today. (Many of you also are passionate and sexy!) Enjoy schmoozing with others, because you will assert yourself with style and diplomacy.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Today the Moon is in your sign, which is empowering. Some of you will enjoy secret flirtations or clandestine love affairs. However, you will be more emotional than usual.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This is a great day to relate to friends or members of groups. In fact, a friend might become a lover. It's a good day for meetings, classes and large conferences.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Relations with bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs are excellent today. Expect someone to ask for your creative advice or input about design, layout and the appearance of something.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Travel for pleasure appeals today. However, some of you will be attracted to someone who is different or from another culture. Go after opportunities in publishing, medicine, the law and higher education.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Gifts, goodies and favors from others will come your way today. This is a good day to ask for a loan or mortgage.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Relations with partners and close friends will be warm and lively today. Even your dealings with the general public are excellent.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Co-workers are supportive today, which is why this is a good day to move forward at your job. If you suggest something, others will follow or agree with you.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
This is a romantic, flirtatious day! New love will blossom for some of you. Many of you will enjoy subtle flirtations and form contacts with others. It's a great day to socialize!

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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9	4	8	5	7	3	6	1	2
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1	6	7	4	2	8	5	3	9
6	3	1	9	5	7	2	8	4
4	2	9	3	8	1	7	6	5
7	8	5	6	4	2	1	9	3
8	1	2	7	3	5	9	4	6
3	7	6	2	9	4	8	5	1
5	9	4	8	1	6	3	2	7